

George Winslow House 1828

George Winslow was a housewright, as were his father and brother, all 3 having houses on the "road leading to Powder Point," years later described as "on the south side of St. George St." They were also ship carpenters, as later deeds show.

George Winslow bought a house lot from his father who described it as "a part of my homestead farm," and there he built a house for Hannah and 2 small children, a family that would soon include 8 more children -- although not all lived to grow up.

The Winslow family homestead was a 1797 Cape, traditional in construction and facing an old cartway across the Alden farm to the town landing on the mill pond. George Winslow built a far different house, modern in its day and facing north on an old path that had just become a laid out road. Yet that new house was not in the conventional foursquare Federal style then so popular.

This Winslow house is 2 rooms and a hall in width, but only one room deep, all new construction in 1828, brick ends, end chimneys, parlor fireplaces, and a hip roof. At some time an older building was moved on to the front, probably a 17th century or early 18th century house with a chimney between its 2 rooms, and that older 2-room building became the kitchen ell. The fireplace may have been rebuilt but Hannah Winslow's kitchen was in this ell.

While it seems odd to incorporate an old house into a new one, it was a practical procedure and economical. It was frequently done in Duxbury. It is not possible to locate the original site for this added-on ell; moving it by sled in winter with oxen was not difficult. It is certain that it came from another location because the father, Edward Winslow, bought his land from the Alden farm, "the northeast corner of my homestead farm," as Amherst Alden wrote, and there surely were no buildings of any sort on this corner acreage.

The porch is well designed with pillars, cornice details, before a door with neat side lights, an impressive front to the house. The stairway in the hall goes straight up to the 2 front chambers, with a nice scroll design on the facing boards, but with a surprisingly undistinguished bannister. However, that seeming inconsistency is evident in several other houses of the same period.

The fireplaces in the front rooms are similar, extending into the rooms to keep all the heat the bricks could

give, but one has an unusual facing, a mahogany framing, beautiful wood that George Winslow probably got from some shipyard supply, or from some coast wise cargo. Hannah's family owned the Drew yards and a number of vessels. Perhaps the mahogany was her choice.

The ell is a fascinating old building, a long narrow 2-room house with a chimney and 2 fireplaces in its center partition. It may have come from the old Delano farm across the street, where there were several early houses. George's brother, Samuel, used just such an old house when he built nearby a few years later. And John Alden had done the same thing when he built his 1653 house -- not an ell -- but incorporating the old into the new.

This Winslow house was apparently considered a good property, for it was mortgaged in 1842 for \$2,500 and again in 1844 for \$1,500, indicating a worthwhile house.

In 1854 George Winslow deeded the house to his son, George M. Winslow, retaining life interest for himself and Hannah. It was Winslow property until 1893 when a man who had come to Duxbury with the Franco-American Cable paid \$4,000 for 15½ acres with a dwelling and other buildings. That was Robert Needham, and the house stayed in his family until 1945 -- only Winslows and Needhams for over 100 years.

Some additions, improvements and changes have been made over the years, all to the rear, and none altering the main house. It stands today just as George Winslow built it, now the home of H. Kirkland and Ruth Switzer.

--Dorothy Wentworth,
Researcher